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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 003191

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/28/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [CU](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/CUBA: SUSPENSION OF TITLE III OF THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: A. SECSTATE 207359

[B](#). THE HAGUE 01439

[C](#). THE HAGUE 01626

Classified By: Acting DCM Andrew J. Schofer for Reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Post recommends the President continue suspension of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act with regard to the Netherlands. Renewed suspension of the LIBERTAD Act for the Netherlands is in the national interest and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba. The Dutch continue to cooperate toward our shared goal of a free and democratic Cuba; Foreign Minister Bot recently explained to Dutch Parliament that Dutch policies and activities emphasize promotion of human rights and freedoms. The Dutch strive to forge a common EU position on Cuba, which they view as essential for advancing the cause of Cuban dissidents. Dutch NGOs continue to advocate for a democratic post-Castro Cuba and to speak out against arbitrary detention of prisoners of conscience. Dutch investment in Cuba is minimal. END SUMMARY

DUTCH POLICY EMPHASIZES PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

[1](#)2. (C) The Netherlands continues to actively promote a common EU position in Cuba with the long term goal of democratic change; In June 2005, Foreign Minister Bot explained to the Dutch Parliament that "maintaining a unanimous Cuba policy is of major importance to the policy's effectiveness." During the same address, Bot pointed to the Dutch Embassy's presence at the Easter March of "Damas de Blanco" (wives and relatives of imprisoned Cuban dissidents) and at a May meeting with members of the Asamblea para Promover la Sociedad Civil (Assembly for the Promotion of Civil Society) as evidence of Dutch, and EU, concern for human rights in Cuba. Bot approvingly added, "the visit of any EU official is always used to raise the human rights situation in Cuba and to press for the release of all political prisoners."

[1](#)3. (C) The Dutch view themselves as a voice of moderation in the EU between Spain's active engagement with Cuba and the "hard" line espoused by the Czech Republic (ref B). Peter van der Geer (Policy Officer, Western Hemisphere Affairs Department, MFA) explained the Dutch instinctively lean more toward the Czech way of thinking but are prepared to strike a more conciliatory posture in the interest of articulating a common EU position.

[1](#)4. (C) While the Dutch are willing to bend a little in order to harmonize with its EU partners, they remain steadfast in their condemnation of human rights conditions in Cuba. In his June remarks to the Dutch Parliament, Bot asserted that, if the EU common position did not result in an improvement of the human rights situation, "the government of the Netherlands will press for further intensification of support to peaceful dissidents, including support to free and independent media, and initiatives that may increase the Cuban people's access to objective news sources."

DUTCH NGOS FOCUS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN CUBA

[1](#)5. (C) Several Dutch NGOs actively promote awareness of human rights conditions in Cuba. Cuba Futuro, an Amsterdam-based NGO with which Post is in close contact, regularly posts information of arbitrary arrests and detentions of political prisoners on their website, www.cuba-futuro.org. On November 16, Cuba Futuro posted a detailed condemnation of the arbitrary arrest and imprisonment of six dissidents. Cuba Futuro also maintains close contact with Dutch government counterparts; Van der Geer explained that his office often coordinates activities with the group.

DUTCH INVESTMENT IN CUBA

[1](#)6. (C) Dutch investment in Cuba has changed little since Post's previous report (ref C). Dutch investment therefore remains minimal. The largest Dutch business interest in Cuba is Damex Shipyards, which operates a facility in Santiago (El Nispero Shipyard). UK-Dutch consumer products company

Unilever and Netherlands-based international bank ING
maintain small sales and representation offices.
BLAKEMAN